

Meeting Date: November 2007

Agenda Item No. 16.

Agenda Item: Farragut Range

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Chip Corsi

Background:

The Farragut WMA shooting range was temporarily closed down by court order until safety requirements (compliance with “no blue sky” criteria) could be met, and then further restricted to 500 shooter days or less until the range could be made acceptable to either the plaintiffs or the court from a noise standpoint. Technology exists to address both issues, but will require additional funds beyond those initially expected to make improvements at the range to better serve sportsmen and others using the facilities. Closing the range would result in a substantial loss of shooting opportunity to sportsmen and other shooters, as well as require clean-up of lead from over 60 years of use as a range, first by the US Navy and later by sportsmen and IDFG personnel.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Range temporarily closed by court order due to safety issues (concern over bullet escapement), with further restrictions on number of shooting days until noise issue addressed to satisfaction of plaintiffs and/or the Court. IDFG manages several shooting ranges around the state to provide facilities for hunters to prepare for firearm seasons. Failure to re-open the range will require clean-up of lead bullets resulting from 60 years of range operation.

Public Involvement Process:

The Farragut range improvements were initially scoped during the late 1990s, including surveys of the public using adjacent Farragut State Park. In the early 2000s, a citizen advisory group was created to help identify desired improvements at the Farragut Range, and a range improvement plan was developed. The plan was shared with the public at public meetings in 2003 and 2004. During initial implementation, a neighborhood group took legal action to have the improvements stopped and the range closed down, resulting in a court hearing.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission adopt a position that IDFG make necessary improvements to the range to create a quality public shooting facility that complies with the court order.

Justification:

No public range exists in close proximity to the primary population center in Kootenai County; facilities are needed to provide hunters a place to practice and sight-in firearms. Other options for range development are extremely limited within proximity to the Coeur d’Alene/Post Falls area.